

22 Mar 2023: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

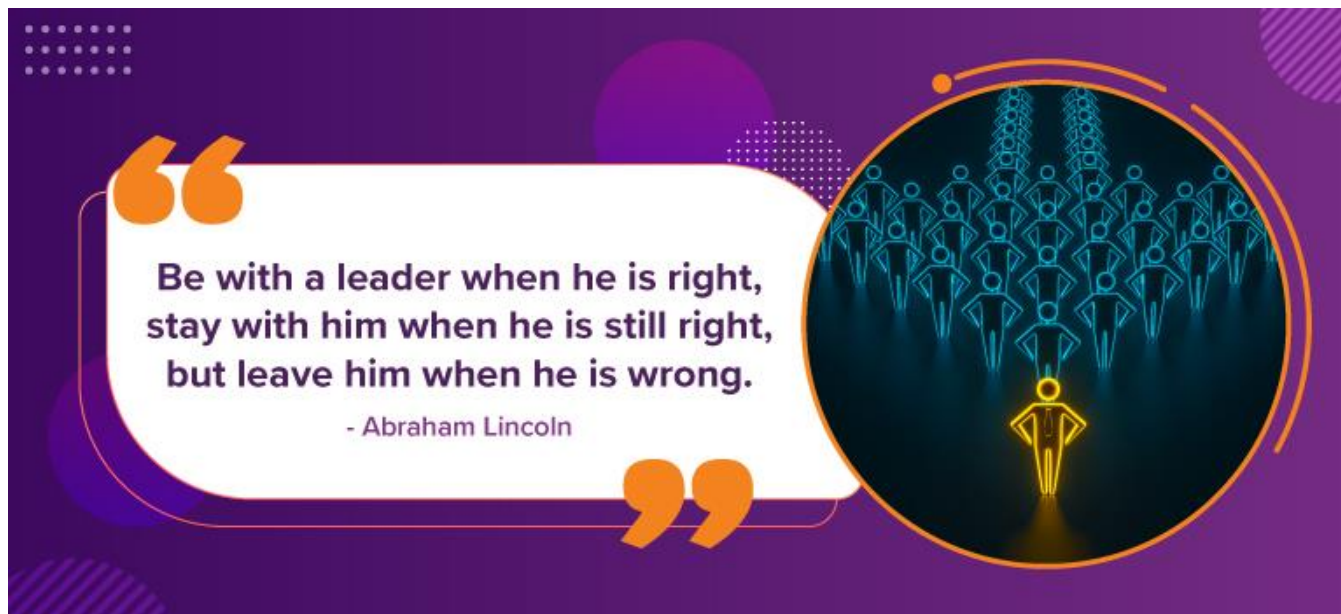


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I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions**A. GS 1 Related**

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS 2 Related**Category: HEALTH****1. Rajasthan's Right to Health Bill**

Syllabus: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health

Prelims: About Right to Health Bill and Right to Health in Indian Constitution

Mains: Critical evaluation of Rajasthan's Right to Health Bill

Context

Rajasthan State Assembly passed the Right to Health Bill amidst strong protests by private doctors.

Rajasthan's Right to Health Bill

- Rajasthan's Right to Health Bill was introduced in the Assembly in September 2022 and was later referred to a Select Committee.
- With the passage of the Bill, Rajasthan has become the first and the only State in India to legislate the right to health.
- A key provision of the Bill is the provision for mandatory free-of-cost emergency treatment for every resident of the State at both government hospitals and privately-run institutions.
 - The Bill provides the right to emergency treatment care without prepayment of requisite fees or charges by any public health institution, health care facility and designated health care centres for all the residents of the State.
- Further, the Bill mentions about 20 rights to a State resident which include the right to informed consent, to seek information and to receive treatment without discrimination based on caste, class, age, gender, etc.
- The Bill guarantees these rights to patients and places the obligation on the government to protect these legal rights and requires the establishment of grievance redressal mechanisms.
- The Bill ensures that the residents of the State are eligible for free check-ups, drugs, diagnostics, emergency transport and care at all public health institutes, along with affordable surgeries.

- The Bill also mandates the government to formulate a Human Resource Policy for health ensuring equitable distribution of doctors, nurses and healthcare workers at all levels of the system across regions.

Read more - [Rajasthan's Right to Health Bill](#)

Right to Health in the Indian Constitution

- The Right to Health is not explicitly mentioned in the Indian Constitution.
- However, the concept of the Right to Health is derived from the [Right to Life and Liberty](#) guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution.
- Furthermore, various courts in the past have highlighted the State's obligation to safeguard and promote the health of citizens, based on constitutional provisions such as:
 - **Article 38** talks about promoting the welfare of people.
 - **Article 47** mandates the government to meet the nutrition and health requirements of the population.

Key concerns associated with the Bill

- The doctors and paramedical staff of private hospitals have been protesting against the Bill. They have criticised the provisions of the Bill as “draconian” as they significantly affect the private health sector.
- Further, the Bill has made it mandatory to provide free treatment during an emergency but the Bill does not define an “emergency”.
- Private healthcare providers have also highlighted the ambiguity around who will pay for the mandatory free-of-cost emergency treatment.
- Experts also opine that the Bill abdicates the State's responsibility in providing health care protection and puts a larger patient load on the private sector.
- Private doctors have also argued that the Bill is futile and over-regulative in nature.
- According to agitating doctors and other staff of private healthcare establishments, amendments suggested by them to the Select Committee were not considered.
- Civil society groups and healthcare activists say that the Bill needs further clarity and must be sharpened to prevent implementation loopholes.

Nut graf: *With the passage of the Right to Health Bill which ensures mandatory free and affordable medical services in both public and privately owned healthcare institutions, Rajasthan became the first ever state in the country to legislate the right to health. However, fault lines have appeared around the Bill as critics believe that the Bill is hastily drafted.*

Category: ECONOMY

1. Understanding waste-to-energy plants

Syllabus: Infrastructure: Energy

Prelims: About waste-to-energy projects

Mains: Challenges associated with the operation of waste-to-energy plants and key recommendations.

Context

The Kerala government has announced the establishment of the State's first waste-to-energy project in Kozhikode.

About waste-to-energy projects

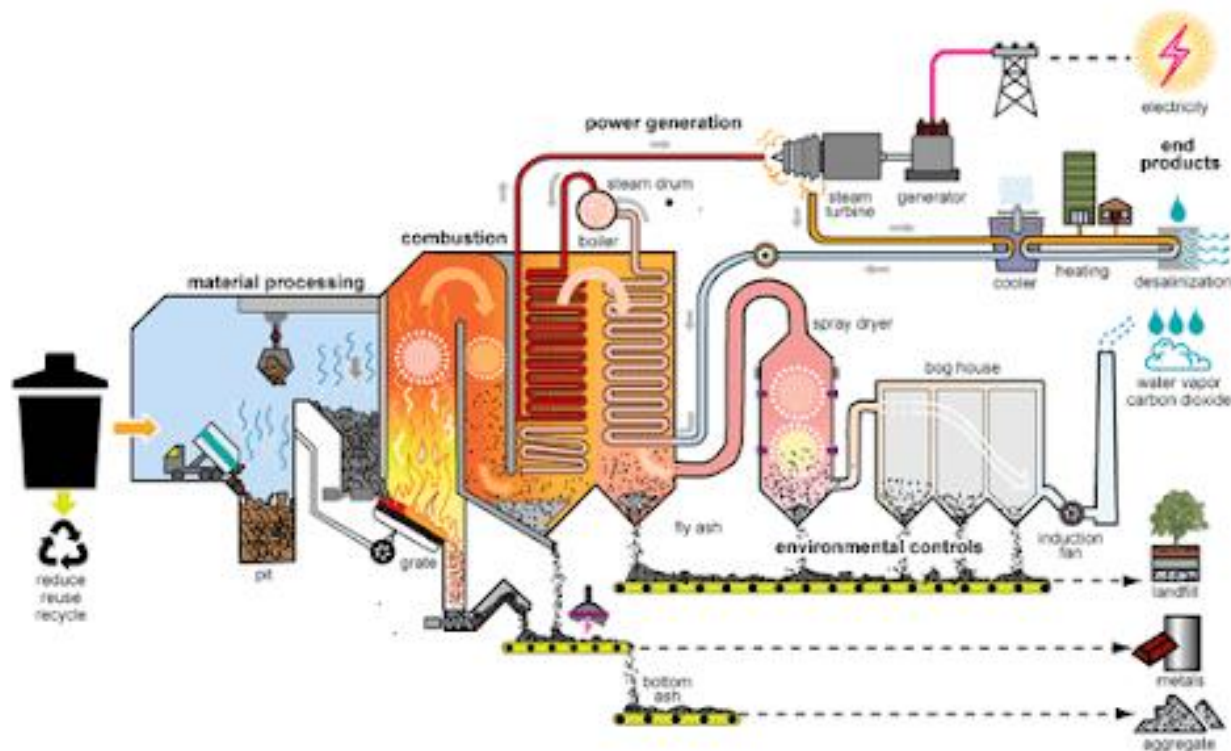


Image Source: EIA

- There are about 100 waste-to-energy projects in India.
- Waste-to-energy projects generate electricity by making use of non-recyclable dry waste.
- Waste-to-energy projects help improve the State's power generation capacity and also reduce the burden of solid waste management (SWM).

- Solid waste management (SWM) refers to the process of collecting, transporting, treating, and disposing of solid waste in an environmentally responsible manner.
- Usually, the solid waste in India is 55% to 60% biodegradable and organic in nature which can be converted into organic compost or biogas.
 - Further, about 25% to 30% of the solid waste is non-biodegradable dry waste and close to 15% consists of silt, stones, and drain waste.
 - Out of the non-biodegradable dry waste, only about two to three percent (i.e. hard plastics, metals, and [e-waste](#)) is recyclable and the rest consists of low-grade plastic, rags, and cloth that can't be recycled.
- Managing the fraction of such non-recyclable dry waste is a key challenge to the SWM mechanism as these materials could also reduce the efficiency of recycling other dry and wet waste.
- Waste-to-energy projects make use of such non-recyclable portions of waste to generate power.
- In waste-to-energy projects, such wastes are combusted to generate heat, which in turn is used to produce electricity.

Key challenges faced by waste-to-energy projects

- **Low calorific value:** Solid wastes in India have low calorific value mainly due to improper segregation.
 - Calorific value refers to the amount of heat energy released during the complete combustion of a unit mass of fuel.
 - The calorific value of coal is around 8,000 kcal/kg.
 - However, the calorific value of mixed waste in India is around 1,500 kcal/kg and is not feasible for power generation.
 - Mixed wastes consist of biodegradable waste that has high moisture content and hence cannot be used for power generation.
- **High costs of energy production:** The cost of producing power from waste is about ₹7-8/unit, whereas the cost at which the electricity boards of the States buy power from coal, hydroelectric, and solar power plants is around ₹3-4/unit.
- **Other issues:** Other key challenges faced by waste-to-energy plants in India include high expectations, improper assessment and characterisation studies, and neglect of on-ground realities while establishing such plants.

Recommendations

- Segregation of wastes must be carried out ideally at the source, if not at the processing plant in order to ensure that the waste available at the facility has calorific value.
- Other than waste segregation, operating such waste-to-energy plants also depends on various factors such as the municipal collection efficiency, moisture content in the waste and the operational efficiency of biodegradable-waste-processing plants.

- Acknowledging the high cost of power generation associated with such plants, efforts must be undertaken to ensure consensus between the State electricity departments, the municipalities, the plant operator, and the power distribution agencies.
- Furthermore, it is important to conduct extensive field studies and assessments of such projects to plug the existing loopholes.

Nut graf: *Out of about 100 waste-to-energy plants in the country, only a few are operational at present owing to various production and operational challenges. Establishing and managing waste-to-energy plants is a complex process and requires the collaborative efforts of various departments, the municipality, the State as well as the residents.*

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. An objective look at a China-led framework

Syllabus: *GS-2, Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interest.*

Mains: *China's Global Security Initiative.*

Context: Chinese Foreign Minister highlighted Global Security Initiative at Lanting Forum.

Details:

- Chinese Foreign Affairs Minister highlighted the Global Security Initiative (GSI) Concept Paper.
 - GSI is projected as a China-led framework that aims to restore security and stability (specifically in Asia).
- It was stated that the five major pillars to implement GSI would be:
 - Mutual respect
 - Openness and inclusion
 - Multilateralism
 - Mutual benefit
 - Holistic approach

- As there is a change in the international geopolitical landscape, China's promotion of such principles is timely and critical.
- China is trying to embrace the opportunity of intensifying the Ukraine War and diverging the perception of the developing countries about the West.
- It is attempting to compete with the U.S. and emerge as an alternative leader.

China's existing approach:

- The first principle of ***mutual respect*** emphasizes adhering to United Nations Charter and international laws. It also focuses on mutual trust and respect.
 - However, it is suggested that China disregards this principle in its relation with its neighbours. For example,
 - It unilaterally disregards the confidence-building measures with New Delhi and also undermines India's territorial integrity and sovereignty.
 - It follows an assertive policy in the South China Sea.
 - Moreover, it rejects the [UNCLOS](#).
- China outrightly rejects freedom of navigation in the East and South China Sea. It tries to consolidate its sphere of influence in the region thereby disregarding the principle of ***openness and inclusion***.
- Though China plays an important role in various multilateral institutions, it sees them through the prism of asymmetric power relations. For instance, China constrains [ASEAN](#) members to collectively act against its assertion. Thus the principle of ***multilateral security*** is also not abided by Beijing.
- The fourth principle highlights ***cooperation and mutual benefit***. China projects [Belt and Road Initiative \(BRI\)](#) as a much-needed cooperative framework.
 - However, in reality, the unsustainable projects under BRI have created more financial burdens on countries with low or non-existing credit ratings.
 - In a project of joint exploration of resources with Manila in Philippine waters, Beijing demanded a larger share in the bid.
- The last principle advocates a ***holistic approach*** to traditional and non-traditional security threats. China's engagement with countries like the U.S. and India indicates its power interest.

Also read: [South China Sea Dispute](#)

Conclusion:

- It is suggested that China's Global Security Initiative (GSI) is far from being an equitable, sustainable, and transparent solution to increasing insecurity in the world.
- It is only an attempt to counter U.S. leadership through narratives.

Also read: [China's New Land Boundary Law](#)

Nut Graf: China's Global Security Initiative is a vision of a future security order. However, it is different from China's existing track record of external engagement. It is suggested that the initiative should be effectively operationalized on the ground.

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. A grave mistake in Great Nicobar

Syllabus: GS-3, Environment conservation.

Mains: Development project in Great Nicobar and its consequences.

Prelims: Great Nicobar.

Details:

- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has given clearance to a mega project in the southern part of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- The [NITI Aayog](#) will steer the project and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation is the project proponent.
- The project is titled 'Holistic Development of Great Nicobar Island'. Its objective is to develop:
 - An international transshipment port of 14.2 mTEU cargo capacity at Galathea Bay
 - An international airport for 4000 passengers (during peak hours)
 - A 450 MVA gas and solar-based power plant
 - An ecotourism and residential township of nearly 160 sq km
- Moreover, offices of multinational corporations will be established by clearing a million trees in tropical rainforests.

Also read: [Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve](#)

Background Details:

- The Great Nicobar is located approximately 1650 km from Chennai and 40 nautical miles from the international shipping route.
- The project to establish a transshipment facility and free trade zone on the island began in September 2020.
- In December 2021, the draft [Environment Impact Assessment \(EIA\)](#) was placed in the public domain for comments and discussion. It was followed by quick approvals, clearances, exemptions, and de-notification.

- The Great Nicobar Island has a population of around 8000. The island will attract around three lakh people, once the project is completed.
- The island is spread over 900 sq km and was declared a biosphere reserve in 1989. In 2013, it was included in UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Programme.
- Notably, more than three-fourths of the island is designated as a tribal reserve under the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Protection of Aboriginal Tribes) Amendment Regulation.

Also read: [Island Development Agency - IDA](#)

Associated Concerns:

- The environmental and ecological cost of the urbanization project in Great Nicobar (a region known for marine and terrestrial diversity) is significantly higher. Thus, it is argued that calling it 'holistic' would be a misnomer.
- It is suggested that the objective to convert the island into a commercial hub is nothing less than an 'ecocide'.
- It will impact the rights of vulnerable tribal communities that depend on forests for survival like the Shompen and Nicobarese.
- As per the EIA report, compensatory afforestation will be carried out in Madhya Pradesh and Haryana. It should be noted that far-field afforestation is not much significant.
- The project will destroy vast stretches of [coral reefs](#).
- The report recommends the transplantation of corals but transplanted corals have a low survival rate and are susceptible to bleaching.
- The Great Nicobar is tectonically unstable. It is located in close proximity to the Ring of Fire and the [Tsunami of 26 December 2004](#).
- The EIA report fails to mention scientific studies before and after the 2004 earthquake. The coastline sank several meters during the earthquake.
- The satellite studies show that the region is gradually regaining its original height. The report disregards this tectonic instability around the island.

Conclusion:

- It should be noted that growth in terms of GDP makes no sense if it results in the irretrievable loss of natural capital.
- India is championing conservation, sustainability, and green development models on international fora. But unsustainable projects will dilute such efforts.

Also read: [List of Biosphere Reserves in India](#)

Nut Graf: The clearance of mega development projects in Great Nicobar Island has raised several concerns about the environmental and ecological cost of the project. It is suggested that the vision of the 'green development model' should become the guiding principle for future economic activities.

F. Prelims Facts

1. INS Androth

Syllabus: GS-3; Security; Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate.

Prelims: About INS Androth

Context

The INS Androth was launched in Kolkata.

INS Androth

- INS Androth is an anti-submarine warfare craft.
- INS Androth is the second in a series of eight Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW SWC) projects.
- INS Androth is named after Androth or Andrott Island which is the largest and the longest island in the Lakshadweep archipelago.
- It is built by the Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) for the Indian Navy.
- The contract for building eight ASW SWC ships was signed between the Ministry of Defence and GRSE in April 2019.
 - INS Arnala was the first of the eight indigenously-built ASW SWC.
 - These Arnala-class of ships are expected to replace the in-service Abhay class ASW Corvettes of the Indian Navy.
- The ASW SWC ships are designed to undertake anti-submarine operations in coastal waters, Low-Intensity Maritime Operations, Mine Laying operations and subsurface surveillance in littoral waters.
- INS Androth and ASW SWC ships are 77.6 metres long, have a displacement of 900 tons and can achieve maximum speeds of close to 25 knots.
- These ships are propelled by three diesel-driven water jets.

G. Tidbits

1. 3 States chip in to stop illegal sand mining in Chambal sanctuary

- Three States namely Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh have begun a joint action to put an end to the illegal sand mining in the [National Chambal Sanctuary](#), situated at the trijunction of these states.
- Coordination between the three States was discussed at a high-level meeting in Jaipur with special emphasis on protecting the fragile ecosystem critical for the breeding of Gharials.
 - National Chambal Sanctuary is known for the critically endangered Gharial populations. Gharials are a species of fish-eating crocodiles.
- Illegal sand mining is threatening the flora and fauna of the sanctuary and close collaborations are required to address the issues associated with illegal mining.
- The Chambal river which is a tributary of River Yamuna cuts through the mazes of ravines and hills in the sanctuary which is also listed as an “Important Bird and Biodiversity Area” and is also a proposed [Ramsar site](#).

2. Parliamentary panel pulls up Railways over losses incurred

- The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways has expressed concerns over the significant drop in the net revenue of the Indian Railways.
- In FY2021-22, the Railways recorded a negative net revenue or loss of about ₹15,024.58 crores.
- In the Demands for Grants Report, the committee noted that the Railways’ net revenues are experiencing a downward trend, except in 2014-15, when it witnessed an increase of 8.20%.
 - The committee has said that the continuous decline in revenues is an indicator of internal deficiencies in the overall planning and management of Railways.
- The operating ratio which is another determinant of the financial health of the Railways has also been persistently high and it reached 107.39%, the highest ever, in 2021-22.
 - The operating ratio indicates how much the Railways spends to earn one rupee.
- The Railways however has said that the sharp increase in the losses is mainly due to an increase in staff cost due to the implementation of the 7th Central Pay Commission in 2016-17 and 2017-18, and the adverse impacts of the COVID pandemic.
- The committee has recommended the Ministry of Railways initiate remedial actions to address the leakages and correct the trend of declining net revenues
 - The committee has also urged the Ministry to explore other non-fare revenues such as advertisements or hoardings, monetisation of surplus railway land, and setting up ATMs at stations.

3. IMF clears \$3-billion bailout for Sri Lanka

- The [International Monetary Fund \(IMF\)](#) has cleared a \$3-billion Extended Fund Facility for Sri Lanka, which is struggling to recover from an economic meltdown.
- The IMF package will help Sri Lanka access up to \$7 billion in funding from IMF and various other International Financial Institutions.
- According to the IMF, the key objectives of the bailout package are to restore macroeconomic stability, improve debt sustainability, protect financial stability, and initiate structural reforms to unlock Sri Lanka's growth potential.
- An IMF "governance diagnostic mission" has also started assessing Sri Lanka's governance and anti-corruption framework in its first such exercise in Asia.
- Sri Lanka's top three bilateral creditors namely India, Japan and China played a key role in unlocking the IMF assistance to the country, by providing financing assurances.

For more information on this topic, refer to the following article:

[UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis dated 03 Mar 2023](#)

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Which of these statements is/are correct? (Level – Easy)

1. Navroz is celebrated on spring equinox day.
2. Ugadi is mainly celebrated in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.
3. Gudi Padwa marks the beginning of the harvest of Rabi crops.

Options:

- a. 1 and 2
- b. 2 and 3
- c. 1 and 3
- d. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: d

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, Navroz/Nowruz is the Iranian or Persian New Year celebrated on the spring equinox day.
- **Statement 2 is correct**, Ugadi is mainly celebrated in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.
- **Statement 3 is correct**, Gudi Padwa, also known as Samvatsara Padvo or the Maharashtrian New Year marks the beginning of harvest season for Rabi crops.

Q2. How many of these statements are correct? (Level – Difficult)

1. The Chambal river is the right-bank tributary of the Yamuna river.
2. The Yamuna Action Plan is being undertaken with the assistance of AFD (French Development Agency).
3. Yamuna passes through 4 states of India.

Options:

- a. Only 1 statement
- b. Only 2 statements
- c. All 3 statements
- d. None of the statements

Answer: b

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, Chambal river is the right-bank tributary of the Yamuna river.
- **Statement 2 is not correct**, The Yamuna Action Plan is being undertaken with the assistance of the **Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)**.
- **Statement 3 is correct**, the Yamuna river mainly flows through 4 Indian states namely Uttarakhand, Haryana, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh.

Q3. How many of these statements are correct? (Level – Moderate)

1. Deep Earthquakes affect large geographical areas and are stronger than shallow earthquakes.
2. The epicentre is the point in the Earth's crust where the earthquake originated.

Options:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: d

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is not correct**, **Shallow quakes tend to be more dangerous and damaging compared to deeper quakes** as seismic waves from deep quakes have to travel farther to reach the surface and hence would have lost their energy.

- **Statement 2 is not correct,** The **focus** is the place inside Earth's crust where an earthquake originates.
 - The point on the Earth's surface directly above the focus is the epicentre.

Q4. Which of the following correctly defines “Windfall Taxes”? (Level – Easy)

- a. It is a wealth tax imposed on people with wealth more than a threshold, as decided by the Government.
- b. It is a tax on imported items when the market price of these items in the country of import is less than their country of origin.
- c. It is a tax on companies and sectors that record sudden profits due to unexpected circumstances.
- d. It is the tax imposed on stock traders on their gains in the stock market.

Answer: c

Explanation:

- Windfall profits are an unexpected rise in profits of a company as a consequence of an external incident which might be due to long-term or short-term reasons and not because of a business decision.
- A tax imposed on such an unanticipated rise in profits is called a windfall profit tax.

Q5. Consider the following pairs: (Level – Easy) [PYQ 2020]

International agreements

Subjects

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Alma Ata declaration | Health care of the people |
| 2. Hague convention | Biological and chemical weapon |
| 3. Talanoa declaration | Global climate change |
| 4. Under 2 coalition | Child rights |

Which of the pair given above is/are correctly matched?

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 4 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 2, 3 and 4 only

Answer: c

Explanation:

- **Pair 1 is correct**, The Alma-Ata Declaration of 1978 identified primary health care as the key to the attainment of the goal of Health for All.
- **Pair 2 is not correct**, The Hague Convention is a treaty that gives the basic framework for dealing with **children who are abducted between member countries**.
- **Pair 3 is correct**, The Talanoa declaration is a process which would help countries implement their Intended Nationally Determined Contributions by the end of 2020.
 - Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) are reductions in greenhouse gas emissions under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
- **Pair 4 is not correct**, The Under2 Coalition is the largest global network of states, regions, provinces and other subnational governments **committed to achieving net zero emissions by 2050** in line with the Paris Agreement.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of a waste-to-energy plant? (10 marks, 150 words) [GS-3, Environment]
2. Rajasthan's Right to Health Bill is a step in the right direction but needs more nuance. Discuss. (10 marks, 150 words) [GS-2, Health]